

In **1992** the teachers of the Oryol State University organized the public environmental group named “Kovyl” aimed to develop environmental projects in Oryol Region; in **1999** Oryol Regional Environmental Public Unification “Center Kovyl” was registered as NGO.

“Center Kovyl” unites ecologists, biologists, geographers, teachers, public men, and experts on conservation, environmental management and computer mapping.

“Center Kovyl” aims to contribute to environmental stabilization in Oryol Region. The members of “Center Kovyl” in the closest proximity with the all Regional social groups conduct measures to meet the following **tasks**:

1. Environmental policies reforming in Oryol Region:

- introduction of wise-use technologies of land management in the self-government practice;
- development of environmental legislation of sustainable natural resource management;
- publication and distribution of information, methodological and educational materials;
- design and implementation of educational programs and conducting training seminars;
- creation of the ecological information database of (maps, technologies).

2. Conservation and restoration of the natural resources of the Oryol Region:

- development of the network of Specially Protected Nature Areas (SPNA) in Oryol Region;
- conservation of rare species of flora and fauna;
- restoration of destroyed nature landscapes.

“Center Kovyl” addresses the problems of the following **target audiences**: local self-government representatives, landowners and land users, university students and teachers, schoolchildren, local populace, NGOs of Russia.

Since 1999 “Center Kovyl” has successfully developed more than **11 projects** in cooperation with WWF, GREENPEACE, IUCN, GEF (see below), including the publications and the seminars on the sustainable environmental management for NGOs, has created the electronic map database for landscape planning needs; has restored much of the steppe areas and oak forests in Oryol Region.

“Center Kovyl” **cooperates with** the Committee of Natural Resources of Oryol Region (local department of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia), the Oryol State University, the National Park “Orlovskoe Polesye”, the Kursk Biosphere Nature Reserve, a number of Russian NGOs.

The personnel of “Center Kovyl” consists of 5 employees – Director, Deputy Director of Public Relations, Deputy Director of Scientific Research, Deputy Director of Administration and accountant.

“Center Kovyl” **is funded** by the means of foundations, government contracts, and individual contributions.

The date of registration of “Center Kovyl” is August 17, 1999.

“Center Kovyl” have completed the following projects:

— 1999 – the project of the **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)** RU 0068.01 «Creation of the Ecological Network». The project is recognized successful and is recommended for the further introduction in WWF activities. 7 months, \$10000.

The results are: involvement of schoolchildren in the forests preservation activities; designing and publication of the textbook "For a young forester ", development of the model of landscape arrangement (Ecological Network, ECONET) of the Oryol Region according to the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy; development of GIS (geographic information system) of the Oryol, Kaluga, Bryansk Regions which helps to estimate the stability of landscapes and to plan nature protection measures according to the economic and natural features of territory.

- 2000 – the project of the **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)** RU 0077.01 «Integration of the Protected Nature Areas in the Regional Context as the Basis of Sustainability of Russia». 9 months, \$10000. The project is recognized successful.

The results are: forestry schools creation, development of GIS (geographic information system), and development of new methods of reforestation.

- 2001 – the project of the **World Conservation Union (IUCN)** №75599 RF 3.6. \$2000, 6 months.

The results are: the textbook “To the schoolchildren and their parents about the Ecological Networks”. The edition has won the first prize at the Russian competition (among NGOs) of ecological textbooks for schoolchildren.

- 2001 – the project of the **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)** RU 0077.01 «Integration of the Protected Nature Areas in the Regional Context as the Basis of Sustainability of Russia», 6 months, \$9600. The project is recognized successful; as the result the Oryol Region has been included in the list of “Ecoregions -2000” within WWF strategy.

The results are: forestry schools creation, development of GIS (geographic information system), development of new methods of reforestation, integration of Specially Protected Nature Areas (SPNA) into the socio-economic conditions of the Oryol Region; the bill “On the System of the Protected Areas in the Oryol Region” prepared by «Center Kovyl» has been endorsed by the Duma of the Oryol Region (regional parliament) and signed by the Governor.

- 2001 – the project of the **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)** RU 0089 «Translation to NO», 4 months, \$3000.

The results are: the photo album “The National Park ‘Orlovskoe Polesye’” (302 pages, 1500 copies) was published and distributed among schools, universities, institutes and libraries of the Oryol Region (free). The grant was given on the preparation of the edition; the print services were paid by the regional administration. For the preparation of the photo album «Center Kovyl» was awarded by the Certificate of the Russian Federation Council.

- 2001 – the project of the **International Foundation for Civil Liberties** №393100, 1st stage (the report was accepted without remarks). \$5000, 10 months.

The results are: the approval of the model of landscape arrangement (Ecological Network, ECONET) of the Oryol Region by the Governor Yegor Stroev; «Center Kovyl» is recognized as the main regional expert group on the nature protection and sustainable development of territories; more than 30 seminars for district administrations were carried out to discuss the problems of reforestation and creation of Protected Nature Areas at the level of districts; the materials on 18 nature reserves creation were developed; oak forests restoration was held (60 hectares), creation of “young foresters schools” and plant nurseries within them, development of the educational programs.

- 2002 - project of the **International Foundation for Civil Liberties** №393100, 2 stage. \$5000, 10 months.

The results are: inspection of the territories, restoration of the steppe areas (20 hectares); population, hunters and foresters interviewing on migration paths of animals and rare species location points.

- 2002 – the project of the **PROON - GEF** “The training seminars for Russian NGOs of Dnepr Basin on GIS technologies in conservation” (IDRC #6.8, GEF#51800). 4 months, \$6134.

The results are: an electronic list of sending information on the Dnepr basin problems has been compiled; training seminars for 12 NGOs of Russia have been conducted (the discussed problems: legislation aspects of the NGO’s activities, technologies of the GIS database creation, land-use planning in the GIS; methods of analysis, biodiversity mapping and ecosystems restoration); two methodological textbooks “The methods and technologies of the GIS implementation in conservation”, “Wise-use technologies as an effective mean of the ecosystems restoration (the ECONET method for the Central Russia forest-steppe zone)” have been published and distributed among NGOs of Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia.

— 2003 - **The Project and Scientific Research Institute “VNIPINEFT”** contract. Development of the draft volume “Background environmental conditions in the area of the oil-digestive plant planned construction, the Orel Region”. 6 months, \$8500.

The results are: the population enlightenment on the fact of the oil-digestive plant construction; public involvement into the discussion on the ecological consequences of the plant construction; an independent ecological examination by the experts has been made; the results of the examination have been officially represented.

— 2003 - **the Committee of natural resources of the Oryol Region** contract (the local department of the Ministry of natural resources of Russia). 3 months, \$6650. The work has been recognized without amendments.

The results are: the recommendations on the conservation work improving have been developed; the technologies of the biodiversity conservation and environmental safety in Central Russia Regions have been worked out (the technologies can be implemented into the forest-use practice, agricultural planning and land inventory recording, conservation planning; the scientific research work has been presented as an illustrated methodological textbook; the textbook has been recognized as an informational and methodological for the environmental departments of Russia.

- 2004 - **the Committee of natural resources of the Oryol Region** contract “**Recommendations on improving work in the field of environment, biodiversity conservation, ecological safety in Central region of Russia**”. Elaborated methodic is applied to forest use, agricultural planning, land cadastre monitoring, environmental protection.

- 2005 – Project “**Scholar forestry networks: attracting volunteers to solving local ecological problems**” implemented in partnership with **Russian Regional Environmental Center**. A network development was initiated, assistance to rural schools and forest units (leskhoz) was provided in establishing new scholar forestries, methodic guides for NGOs, teachers and scholars on volunteer reforestation were published.

- 2005 - Project “**Red Book of Oryol Oblast: towards first edition**” started within **Ford Motor Environmental Program**. PDF-version of the Red Book will be designed to be free distributed on CDs among schools across the region and potential donors of the Red Book hard copy publishing.

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